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Work-based learning in the biosciences

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Work Based Learning in the Biosciences

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Work based learning and placements in the Biosciences at UWS

□ During the 2007-8 session the Biosciences at UWS revised all the degree programmes to accommodate a move from 15 to 20 point modules and an integration between Hamilton and Paisley campuses.

□ Of the 4 Bioscience programmes, 3 (Applied Bioscience, Health & Lifestyle, & Applied Biomedical Science) were designed to include an academically validated work based learning component to help students focus on employability issues.

□ The Applied Biomedical Science work based learning modules were developed in conjunction with NHS Scotland and through collaboration with Glasgow Caledonian University and managers of hospital laboratories. This 15 week placement in Level 9 was designed so that the student could complete an IBMS portfolio and thus register with the HPC as a Biomedical Scientist upon successful graduation.

□ For the Applied Bioscience and Health & Lifestyle programmes, 2 work based learning modules were developed to support and further enhance practical experience : a 4 day per week placement (40 point module) and a 1 day per week placement (20 point module).

Key aspects

□ **Flexibility of opportunity:** at one extreme, the Applied Biomedical Science placements must meet professionally prescribed conditions, while at the other, students may benefit from experiences in a wide range of biologically related graduate professions by adapting to the preferences of the specific provider. Some placement providers prefer students to be present for an extended period, while others are more comfortable with a student for only one day a week.

□ **Assessment undertaken by academics,** although placement provider feedback may help inform the decision. Includes aspects of health & safety, evidence-based accumulation of skills, individual role and 'value' to the organisation, record of progress & self evaluation, report production and audio-visual presentation.

□ **Feedback from placement providers** can influence programme design, as it soon becomes apparent what skills are lacking, but required by students on placement.

□ **Highly valued by students who participate.** Most students return for their Honours year with an improved focus on what they wish to gain from their degree, a few changing direction. A few students do not return but go straight into employment, while others may complete their Honours year on day release from the new employment.

Graduates of the 21st Century Project

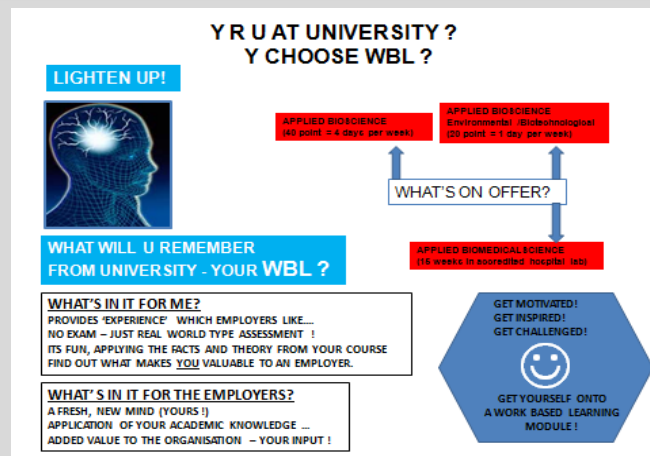
□ **Production of a work based learning guide by student for students:** the team leaders who worked on the various placement modules obtained funding to support 4 students to produce a guide that would:

- Encourage fellow students to take a work based learning module
- Promote UWS Bioscience degrees as opportunities for work experience

□ Four students who had recently been on placement were recruited to produce the guide. They were given a remit and supported through 3 workshop sessions to generate the ideas and messages that they wished to convey. The last workshop was used to consider how these messages may be best conveyed. Students submitted Powerpoint presentations and had access to an online learning facility (Blackboard) to exchange and develop ideas.

□ The 4 separate contributions were then integrated and rationalised by the academic team and the final booklet generated through the University graphics department.

□ Some examples of key pages in the booklet are shown below.



21ST CENTURY STUDENT APPLIED BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE

Hi there, my name is Magdalena .



*I spent 15 weeks on a placement in the haematology lab in Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow . **Work based learning** gave me the chance to sample what life would be like working in an **NHS laboratory**. I learnt a variety of practical skills and completed an IBMS portfolio.*

***Work based learning** allowed me to gain a competitive advantage over other job applicants , as I had proof of my work experience and competencies. It also helped me network and provided work experience for my CV.*

*My **placement** allowed me the chance to gain work references , build confidence in practical skills and have fun.*

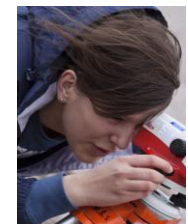
*I am now working in the SNBTS in Edinburgh . The **work based learning** helped me get the first job for which I attended an interview.*



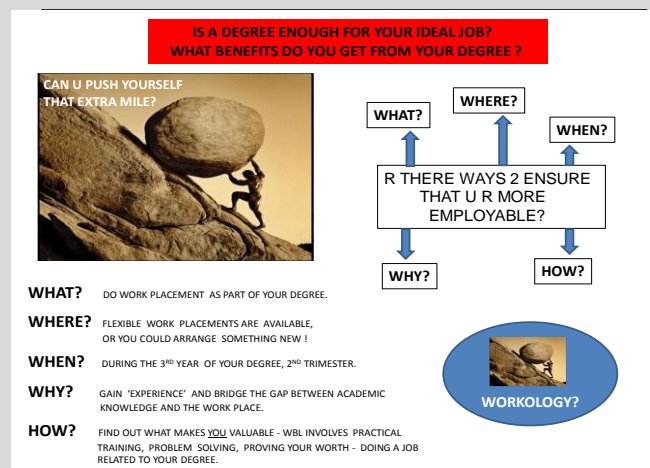
APPLIED BIOSCIENCE (ENVIRONMENTAL/BIOTECHNOLOGY)



What? Researched and built CARG website.
Where? Renfrewshire Council, Biodiversity
When? 3rd year degree programme - 2nd trimester
Why? Opportunity to apply university knowledge
How? Recommended by University tutor.



"I think that creativity and computing skills are two important things sought-after nowadays and my placement really allowed me to improve them. Although, for me, a working experience in United Kingdom is a real asset on a CV. It opens many doors in the world of work in France".
Constance.



Applied Biosciences

*My experience of worked based learning was great.
I worked in a hospital lab but there are many other options for work in the bioscience field.*

Many of my fellow students went to other hospital labs, distillers, analytical testing labs, food safety testing, etc.

I did microbiology but there were people who did analytical chemistry (if you like that sort of thing), haematology, microbiology, virology, environmental testing and worked in the life science /biotechnology industry.

One draw back is that the forensic students won't get a placement in a forensic lab.

Sorry, folks the law will not allow you to.

Helena Dunsmore



Stuff you need to know about placements

- They are in the third year of your study.
- They are flexible and vary to suit your needs.
- They are fun and will give you confidence and experience to bridge the gaps between your learning and the practical side of work.
- They will make your time at Uni more memorable and enjoyable.
- They push you to learn and be part of a team

This booklet was conceived & developed by a team of 4 students who had been on the UWS Work Based Learning modules:

Ms L Barford
Ms M Buska
Ms H Dunsmore
Mrs J Smith

